

GUYVERS

Guyvers was the name of a large, old house with land and outbuildings, sadly long since demolished, which was the last in the row at Brewers End, Takeley Street. It is unclear when the house was built, but George Piper, carpenter, undertaker, decorator and general handyman, moved in with his family in 1857. George kept a work ledger in which there is a long entry which begins at the end of 1859 entitled 'Geo Piper Work Done at home' and includes such improvements as 'Stoking Drains up in Yard, Repairing Stable with Bords, New Rail and Banisters, Painting fence and Doors & co - 30lbs Paint, fence Cross the yard, Painting & Guttering house - 20lb Paint, Roof to Shed and side, New Doors to Shed front, Slates for Shed, Bording Stable, Curling hous Bricks to foundation of fence, fence in Orchard & Gate', this last entry is dated 11/08/1866. It sounds like a lot of renovation, and means that Guyvers was far from new when he moved in, at which time it was owned by his father Isaac. On Isaac's death in 1863, the house passed to George's stepmother, Isaac's second wife Martha née Jaques, for her lifetime, and George paid her rent at the rate of £10 per annum.

After Martha's death, all Isaac's properties were sold at Sworder's auction of 28/08/1884 'by direction of the family of the late Isaac Piper'. George presumably bought the property as it was the home of his family until 1935.

Particulars.

IN TAKELEY STREET.

LOT 1.

THE VALUABLE FREEHOLD

SHOP AND PREMISES,

AS NOW OCCUPIED BY Mr. GEORGE PIPER, comprising

A PLASTER AND TIMBER BUILT AND SLATED HOUSE,

Containing on the Chamber Story, 5 BEDROOMS; and on the Ground Floor, SHOP with DOUBLE FRONT, 3 SITTING ROOMS, KITCHEN AND DAIRY.

Adjoining is a BOARD and SLATED COAL HOUSE, and a BOARD and PANTILED BREWHOUSE.

There is also a BOARDED and THATCHED WORKSHOP, a BOARDED and SLATED TIMBER SHED, also a THATCHED STABLE and PIGGERY.

IN THE REAR OF THE HOUSE IS A

GARDEN AND ORCHARD.

The Property is situated at TAKELEY STREET, but in the parish of HATFIELD BROAD OAK, and rented at a very low rent of £10 per Annum.

NONE OF THE FIXTURES AS ARE THE PROPERTY OF THE VENDORS WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE PURCHASE.

There are 2 Boarded Buildings and a Boarded and Pantiled Henhouse, all in the Orchard, which are the Property of the Tenant, and will be removed by him.

TAKELEY LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

We can conjure up a very good idea of the size of Guyvers and its outbuildings from those sales particulars, and we know too that there was a pond at the back of the house which was pressed into service in 1914, when its waters were instrumental in dousing a house fire opposite Guyvers; the pond held sufficient water to be effective until a hose could be laid to a larger pond, which lay in the vicarage gardens 500 yards away. This is the only known photo of Guyvers and George's great grandson Mike Piper, who lived there for a time from the age of 9, made a note that this *'is only half of the original photo... The right hand side showed the yard, the coffin making workshop, the Garage workshop and the forecourt of the Garage'* -this part of the photo has been lost.



Guyvers with its shop, pictured c1885, the only person named is Mrs Galloway but I think Alf Piper is on the extreme left

Mike lived with his grandparents Alfred Charles Piper and Lizzie née Chilvers at Guyvers between 1933 and 1936, his daughter Heather tells me that her father always had pride in his voice when he spoke of the place and that he would have been *'so joyous'* to know that some of its history had been published by the TLHS, of which he had been a member.

George Piper's great granddaughter Audrey was a frequent visitor and she told me that Guyvers was a rambling, substantial building. She thinks that *'bits were added on'*, that it had *'lots of rooms and several bedrooms but no bathroom'*. A book entitled *Essex Privies* by Stan Jarvis has this to say about the amenities at Guyvers; it is a sad state of affairs that possibly more is known about its privy than the house itself.... *'Mike Piper's grandparents ran the post office, general stores and the garage as well as a boarding house at Guyvers, Brewer's End, Takeley, in the 1930s. They had a 'double' with two seats side by side, well away from the house, at the end of a row of outhouses. It was of tarred wood construction, approximately five feet by two feet six – it had no windows or artificial lighting so it was a dark, draughty, smelly hole.... The cesspit into which everything dropped was under the building, extending out into the garden where it had a wooden cover. 'It was a ritual when we wanted to go to the lavvy as we were always accompanied by an adult. At night we carried a little oil lamp which usually blew out on the way and had to be relit when we were inside. I remember how ghostly and eerie it was and how the adult would keep saying, "Hurry up! It's freezing!" If I can recall correctly my grandparents always used to go up together in the morning and my*

TAKELEY LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

grandad always smoked his pipe. Whether the boarders went in two by two I cannot say. I have vivid memories of Nurse Shaw, the District Nurse, who was a boarder; she was a very, very, large lady and must have completely filled the tiny space. As to upkeep, Ethel Rolph, the general maid had the privilege of scrubbing the wooden seat every day and pouring disinfectant into the pit. Henry Spiller emptied it, using a long-handled scoop and a wooden wheelbarrow, and emptied the contents into a hole at the bottom which was then covered in earth. One could smell the odour for days after – but it grew lovely rhubarb.’ Sometime later, a covered walkway from the house was added, ‘a real bonus’ says Audrey.

The family lived in the left hand half of the house and the room that overlooked the main road on that side, was called the breakfast room. Apparently one day George and his wife Elizabeth were sitting in the breakfast room when a man went past with a horse and cart. ‘*I wonder who that is?’* mused Elizabeth. With that, George threw open the window and shouted ‘*Hey mister, my wife wants to know who you are!*’

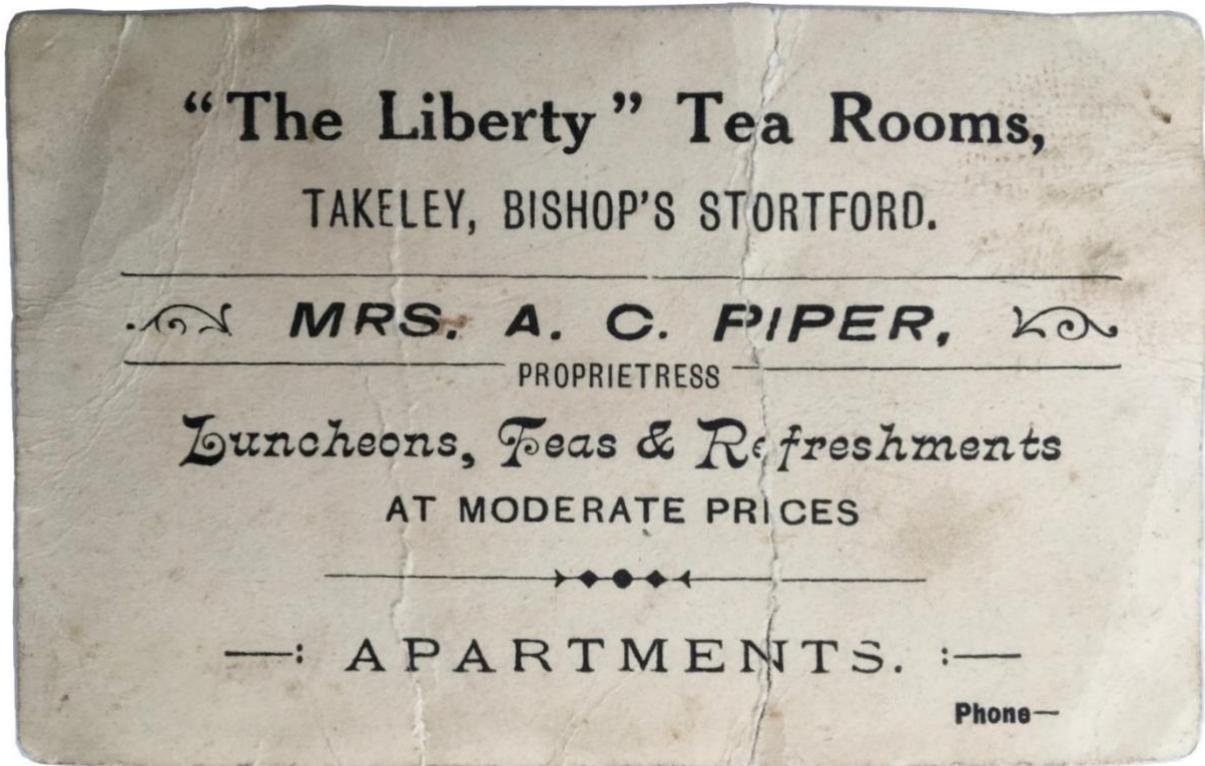


Spring 1895

George and Elizabeth Piper seated with some of their family, including youngest son Alf, back right, and his wife Lizzie next to him, they will run the Tea Rooms at Guyvers.

There were five bedrooms on the first floor, and in the attic, George's unsold coffins were to be found – his grandson Leslie used to get into trouble if found playing up there and as a young girl, his sister Bé (a nickname, short for Baby) used to help her grandmother stuff little pillows which would be used inside the coffins.

The right hand half of Guyvers was the commercial side of the building which housed a shop and then later, the Liberty Tearooms, with bedrooms above for lodgers. For a few years in the early 1930s, it housed the local telephone exchange, note that the card for the tea rooms was reprinted when they knew their new telephone number... 1.



TAKELEY LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

As mentioned, to the right of the main house was a large area of land which housed George's undertaker's and carpentry business, and then later, a bicycle repair shop run by Alf Piper. Later still, Alf undertook vehicle repairs and ran the first garage in Takeley, possibly with help from his son Leslie who was an AA patrolman from 1924 to 1933, when he was discharged for breaking the rules.....



c1903. Bé, unknown lady and Leslie at Guyvers

RECEIPT UNLOCKS STORE'S HISTORY

STORTFORD HOUSE,
BISHOPS STORTFORD.



ROBERT LOCK,

DRAPER & SILK MERCER

DRESS & MANTLE MAKER

MILLINERY

FAMILY MOURNING.

Served by N^o 11 Rec^d by Date 8/91

16 1/2	13	3
5	9	9
20	1	0 1/2
		18 0 1/2

Story by PETER GREEN

AN auction of rare photographs jogged the memory of Mike Piper.

In the collection which fetched £640 in Bishop's Stortford, was a splendid print of the draper and mercer shop of Robert Lock.

Mercer was the name given to dealers in fabrics and Mr Lock, who established his business in 1770 in South Street, where Woolworth's today straddles the site overlapping Potter Street, was fully stocked to provide everything from the cradle to the grave.

Mr Piper, a 69-year-old former paint factory works manager, of Little Hallingbury, is researching family genealogy.

He has the help of his second cousin, Marjorie Wallis, of Garnetts, Takeley, whose late aunt, Doris Galloway, left in her care a number of fascinating documents and photographs.

One of the items was a receipt from Mr Lock's shop and the articles — pencilled in 110 years ago — look as though they were written yesterday.

The link with Mr Piper was his great grandfather, George Piper, who ran an undertaker's and builder's business on an A120 site now occupied by a Fina petrol filling station.

Mr Lock offered clothing for "family mourning" and some of the materials that Mr Piper needed in his work.

The articles on the receipt show 26-and-a-half yards of chintz at 6d a yard; five yards of Holland cloth at nine pence a yard; and 25 yards of braid at a halfpenny a yard,

making an old-money total of 18 shillings and a halfpenny.

Mike Piper believes that the Holland cloth was a kind of muslin used for the lining of coffins and the braid went round the edges.

When George Piper died in 1900, the business was run by his wife, Elizabeth, and then by Mike's grandfather, Alfred Piper, until he decided to branch out into the motor trade next door in the 1920s.

Robert Lock's receipt logo is a fine illustration of the shop showing elegant carriages drifting by and pedestrians dressed in Victorian apparel chatting in the centre of the road — heedless of the 20th-century rushing towards them.

Trained
teacher
nabbed

A TAXI driver tipped off police that a student attending a reunion school friends Bishop's Stortford, had one drink too many.

Bishop's Stortford court heard on Monday that trainee teacher Caroline Millard was followed by a taxi driver from Sawbridgewort Harlow before she stopped.

Millard, of Road North, Shepleaded guilty to driving over the legal limit.

She was fined with £30 costs and disqualified from driving for 12 months.

Richard Stevens prosecuting, said: "The police had no other cause to stop the vehicle other than the information received."

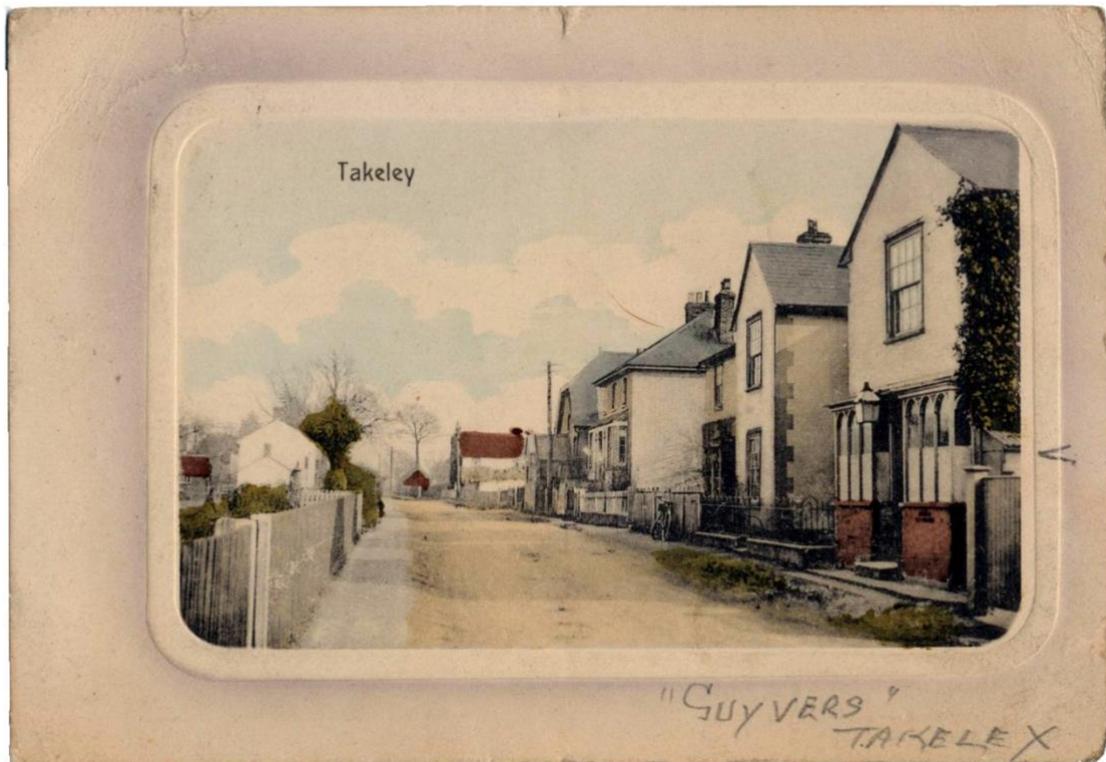
"There was no question of bad driving as she was followed some distance."

The court was told that Millard had two pints of lager in the Boar's Head, High Street, Bishop's Stortford, and a further pint at a friend's house.

She rang for a taxi to get a bag from her car then to go to Roydon but changed her mind because she had more money than she thought and felt sober enough to drive.



ABOVE: Robert Lock's Stortford House shop in Potter Street. TOP: The antique receipt, pencilled in 110 years ago.



Postcard from Alf Piper to his sister Lena Pryor – Guyvers is marked on the right
The houses up the road are Creewood, Lumsdale and then the Recreation Hall with the mansard roof

The house remained in the wider family until around 1935, and for a time was owned by George's son-in-law George Joseph Pryor – he gave Alf Piper money intended for the installation of petrol pumps, but Alf's daughter Bé (later Galloway), used to spend much of her time at Guyvers, especially on the tennis court, which was allegedly built with Joe Pryor's petrol pump money! The house, garage and land was bought in 1935 by a local family the Newmans, and around 1938, the garage was occupied by the Cayzer Brothers (another local family, Messrs Cyril L and DA Cayzer attended Jack Galloway's funeral). The Cayzers lived in Yew Tree Cottage and had bought Alma Cottage and the site of the Rein Deer pub in 1937 from where they traded as a garage, and they took one of their employees, Len Bolden, with them to the Guyvers site. In 1939, the pumps at Guyvers were the first in Takeley to be electrically operated, but as World War II broke out so soon after, they were probably not much used due to rationing, and a general shortage of petrol.

A register commissioned in 1939 due to the outbreak of war, shows Guyvers occupied by Kenneth and Nellie Newland, Kenneth was a wholesale egg and poultry merchant. Even at the end of the 1940s, when Audrey used to visit a relative who was renting Guyvers whilst waiting to move into the Four Ashes public house at Brewers End, she remembers that the telephone exchange paraphernalia was still there.

TAKELEY LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

The house was demolished at some time after August 1955; there is a document dated 03/08/1955 from which this plan is taken.



In January 1915, it is stated that Guyvers belonged to Harold Joseph Pryor (son of George Joseph Pryor) but no ownership details are mentioned after that date. Harold, who was killed in WWI, had acquired it from his maternal uncle, George Henry Piper, the oldest son of George Piper. In an electoral roll of 1908 however, Guyvers is listed as belonging to Alfred Piper, and in a Poll document of 1915, he is still listed as the owner.

The Cambridge Service Station was built on the site of the house, one of many garages along the old A120 between Great Dunmow and Bishop's Stortford.



The garage closed in the late 1990s and the site lay dormant until it was eventually purchased for redevelopment by Chase End Developments Ltd in 2006, and is now occupied by these houses called Cambridge Cottages.



I would like to thank two of my third cousins, Heather Piper and Ted Harvey for their valuable assistance in producing this article and for supplying several of the images.